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Out of Nature's Creed

*A Poem of
Optimistic Philosophy*

BY
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SAN FRANCISCO
A. M. ROBERTSON
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DEDICATED, WITH PERMISSION,
TO
JOAQUIN MILLER

To humankind a poet, he,
Prophetic in his power ;
Protector to the lordly tree ;
Creator to the flower.

A teacher to the singing creeks ;
A shepherd to the hills ;
A brother to the mountain peaks
Whose realm his fancy fills.

To man at times a mystery,
Alone, austere and wild ;
Yet, most of all he loves to be
A playmate to a child.

And now to him upon the height
I bring this verse of mine,
As with a reverent hand I might
Place blossoms at a shrine.

Out of Nature's Creed

Man, seeking boundless truth afar,
Trains all his thought upon a star.

He peers upon the vast unknown
As though the light were there alone.

Yet, all the boundless truth is near,
And God and Heaven are with us here.

In human darkness, we are told,
The flowers of truth will not unfold ;

But this illusion well may be
In thinking wrong when Right we see.

Of Nature's truth was noontime made?
Of something else the midnight shade?

One sun alone in day can shine ;
A myriad suns at night are mine.

Our noonday orb defies the sight;
Far distant orbs give softer light.

The stars in countless hosts I view,
And know that every gleam is true.

Yet, could we nearer contact earn,
Each soothing star would glare and burn.

'Tis well that while our fancies roam,
Our feeble bodies stay at home,

But near or distant, day or night,
May we behold but truth and right.

What sometimes seems a strange defect,
The true perspective will correct.

Woo not the unknown good alone;
Let good be all about you shown.

See in the gleams of children's eyes
More gleams of God than in the skies.

Make homes, and at thy hearths shall be
Worlds grand as all Infinity.

God's best of blessings is to toil;
The world's great storehouse is the soil.

But bend your efforts toward the sod:
The field's a heaven—yourself a god.

The man who plants brings into birth
New life, new beauty, on the Earth.

Wherever you may plant a tree,
A helping friend you'll thenceforth see.

What beauty, glory, wealth and power
For him who grows the simple flower!

And while by toil your way you earn,
Old Nature's secret lore you learn.

A demagogue will loudly preach,
But truth the silent lilacs teach.

Ah, vain the pomp of churchly show
Compared with prayer of violet low!

As timid as a timid child,
Though richly garbed, is tulip wild.

How poor would the arbutus be
Without its wealth of modesty!

But, too, in golden poppies' blaze
The virtue of the sunlight stays.

I think that sweetest blooms the rose
That has been cradled in the snows,

Though some love best the wondrous vines
Where summer sun forever shines.

The fairest blossoms man has trod,
But even weeds are flowers of God.

Whatever seeds to earth may fall,
God's gardener, Nature, tends them all.

And think you, in the garden plan
Old Nature's skill is lost on man?

Ah, no! The gardener's highest art,
Alone, could grow the human heart.

The rose of whitest hue may chide
Her sister rose in crimson dyed;

Yet we in our affection know
'Twas God that caused them both to grow.

God give us love and light to see
That like his varied flowers are we.

Should man forever seek one hue,
The many colors still he'd view.

Or should he toil all white to stain,
The spotless white would yet remain.

'Twas God's own wisdom that began
The varied excellence of man.

Ah, would the truth were understood,
That all the works of God are good!

No tedious logic e'er can bring
Such truths to man as grow in Spring.

The Summer sun would vainly shine
Except as warmth of life divine.

Rich Autumn were a worthless gleam
Without a Springtime in its dream.

Then, when the robes of Winter fall,
Does life's dear snowtime end it all?

Old Nature strict account will keep
Of everything she puts to sleep;

And fret and trouble as we may,
'Tis God that orders all decay.

All things that breathe must suffering feel,
That contrast may their joys reveal.

All things of Earth have work to do;
The stoic rock as well as you.

Think not the little bird that sings
And treads the morning with its wings
Has naught in life but joy:

The cold, the fiercest storm that blows,
A world that's full of mortal foes,
Its bravest hopes employ.

As takes the lark his upward flight
And gains from Heaven a nearer light
To sanctify his song,

So we should ever upward gaze
And tempt sad souls their eyes to raise
Above what men call Wrong.

The songbird rises on the air,
A morning song embodied there.

Yet some, when thus the notes are heard,
Find fault that Earth can claim the bird.

"Poor fallen thing," I've heard men say,
"From Heaven you have lost your way!"

Ah, no! Regeneration's work is there:
The bird has earned its world of air.

Look back to old Jurassic day
And read the story in the clay.

Note where the bird first found the wing,
First rose from earth, first learned to sing.

And man, who long ago could fly,
Outgrew his wings and laid them by.

He gained the heights that fancy brings,
Beyond the feeble power of wings.

Within his range of mental gaze,
The farthest star confines its rays.

He knows the truths of rock and clod;
He knows the universe, and God.

Man still can power of wing command
By use of brain and skillful hand.

But close to earth are wings confined:
All Space is swept on wings of mind.

A thousand years would light require
To reach where instant thoughts aspire.

The law that all Creation holds
Still guides the tree, the rose unfolds.

The greatest star of Night's bright band
Has kinship with the grain of sand.

One law holds sun and sand in place—
The star itself a grain in Space.

One law for Earth and Heaven above,
The boundless law that men call Love.

Resolve to truth what seems unworth:
'Tis but a darker flower of earth.

The worthless matter that you spurn
Will soon its use in Nature learn.

Where once you marked a tree's decay,
A fair young plant has bloomed to-day.

Cast off what now you cannot use—
Does Nature, too, that thing refuse?

Or will she, in her patient care,
Resolve it back to earth and air?

That cast-off thing she'll fondly plan
To shape a tree, or flower, or man.

Does not the soul that seems all wrong
As truly unto Right belong?

May little lives discordant be
In Nature's infinite harmony?

What learns the man whose thoughts, afar,
Are still centered on the star?

Ah, well! the star we cannot reach!
What use about the star to preach?

Our Earth for us the only sphere,
The best of stars attends us here.

Whate'er may come, old Nature's voice
Proclaims the creed: "Be glad! Rejoice!"

A heaven we have at hearth or plow:
Eternity's about us—now.

The people out at yonder star
Are not more strange than humans are.

Could we through Space forever go,
We'd only find what here we know;

The realms at which we gaze in awe
All vibrant with our Earth-tuned law.

Ah! man at telescope, pray tell,
Would not your mirror do as well?

And has Infinity some part
Not pictured in the finite heart?

In every being Nature dwells
And all her wondrous story tells.

For Truth we make confusing din
Of search without. 'Tis found within.

Where watchful Peter guards the gate,
The password is: "Appreciate."

Unless you learn this word on Earth,
For no hereafter are you worth.

A better world were waste of bliss
On man who found no good in this.

Find beauty where it grows for you;
Have open heart for all that's true.

Fix not your thoughts beyond the grave,
Your one poor hope your soul to save.

Do good! Do right! Let not your creed
Consume your soul with selfish greed!

I've known of some—ah, worthless quite!
Who ne'er did wrong, but ne'er did right.

Fill fellow-lives with hope and cheer;
Make heaven round about you here.

Why pray for what's at your command?
Take up your work! Lend God a hand!

No faith in God? Then, hapless elf,
Be godlike as you may, yourself!







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